

Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Strategic Policy & Resources Committee |
| Subject: | Corporate Plan Update |
| Date: | 18 November 2011 |
| Reporting Officer: | Peter McNaney, Chief Executive |

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| 1.0 | <u>Relevant Background Information</u> |
| 1.1 | As agreed previously by Members, work has been ongoing to develop the new corporate plan for the period 2012-2015. Members have played a central and constructive role in this planning process and have helped bring focus and attention to the key priorities for the city and areas for action for the Council. |
| 1.2 | Members will recall that there have been a number of key engagement events in recent months in support of the corporate planning process, including Committee discussions, Party briefings, workshop sessions and area-based briefings. As part of this overall process, work has also taken place on the development of a draft 'stimulus package' which seeks to communicate the Council's commitment to tackling the effects of the economic downturn in the city. The draft stimulus package had been discussed in detail by the Committee at its meeting on 21 October 2011 |
| 1.3 | This report seeks to update Members on the current status of the development of the new Corporate Plan; setting out a clear timetable scheduling when key strands of interlinked work such as the stimulus package and Belfast Masterplan will be brought forward and the role of Members in supporting this process. |
| 1.4 | The Party Leaders met as the Party Leaders' Forum facilitated by Jon Huish on 4 November 2011. A note of their meeting is enclosed as Appendix 2. |
| 2.0 | <u>Key Issues</u> |
| 2.1 | Corporate Plan |
| 2.1.1 | The development of the priorities and projects which will be the content of new Corporate Plan has been ongoing for several months facilitated and supported through a series of Party Group and Member briefings. An initial discussion with Party Group Leaders took place at the end of June to begin to identify and explore potential priorities for the Council and to shape Members input. |
| 2.1.2 | To facilitate wider engagement, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed, at its meeting in June, that a series of thematic workshops would be arranged to enable all Members to set out and discuss their views on the important issues and for the city and to give direction on the key objectives and priorities for the new Council term. |
| 2.1.3 | There have already been two productive workshop sessions focusing on the corporate themes of leadership (Place-Shaping) and the economy. The third and final workshop 'People, Communities and Neighbourhoods' is scheduled for 29 November 2011 . This workshop will explore with Members potential local neighbourhood interventions and community support initiatives. Members will be aware that Jon Huish, a peer Elected Member, has also been working with Party Leaders and Party Groups over recent months in regards the corporate planning process and exploring potential future priorities for the Council. |
| 2.1.4 | In moving forward, there will be continued engagement over coming weeks with Members through established mechanisms including the Party Leaders Forum and the Budget and Transformation Panel. It would be the intention that a first draft of the new Corporate Plan will |

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| | be submitted for the consideration of the Committee in January 2012. This would ensure that the discussion on the emerging Council priorities and projects is integrated with the setting of the rate for 2012/2013 and consideration of capital programme and city investment. |
| 2.2 | Stimulus Package |
| 2.2.1 | As instructed by Members at the meeting on 21 October, officers have been further investigating the feasibility/deliverability of project proposals for inclusion in the draft stimulus package and establishing the potential resource implications for the Council. Following completion of this necessary baseline work, joint Member and officer teams will be established in late November 2011 to progress developmental work around key projects and establish firm project proposals. Composite reports on the outcomes of this work will be brought to Budget and Transformation Panel and SP&R Committee in December 2011. This will ensure that a city-wide perspective is taken and any decision in respects to prioritisation and resourcing investment is considered within the context of affordability thresholds. |
| 2.2.2 | It would be the intention that a final draft stimulus package would be submitted for the consideration of the Committee in January 2012 in line with the corporate planning and rate setting process. Members will be asked to assess affordability limits and give direction as to the level of investment which they would wish to make set against a number of rate options. |
| 2.2.3 | The January 2012 timescale would also enable appropriate consideration to be given to the outcomes from the 'People and Communities' workshop on 29 November and other important strands of work being developed including, for example, the role of the Council in supporting the local economy, tackling poverty and inequality, supporting employment and skills development, supporting local suppliers across the city etc. Developmental work is ongoing to scope and identify how the Council can support and bring maximum effect to these important issues through both direct and indirect (i.e. working in partnership or lobbying) interventions. |
| 2.2.4 | <p>With respects to supporting employment and skills development within the City, Members will note that at the Council meeting on 3 October, the undernoted Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor McCarthy and seconded by Councillor Attwood.</p> <p><i>"The Council recognises the importance of both local and central Government taking a lead on programmes to mitigate the impacts of recession.</i></p> <p><i>Within our own range of functions and economic spend, there are significant opportunities to employ the long-term unemployed, offer placements for graduate trainees, create Steps to Work training opportunities and provide an enhanced Community Outreach Scheme, to include placements across the Council services to those serving Community Service Orders.</i></p> <p><i>The Council requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider how new work, training or placement opportunities could be integrated into all Council spend – both internally and externally".</i></p> <p>Members will be aware of the ongoing work to explore what opportunities exist for the Council in this regard and how these could be resourced through, for example, potential savings in overtime and agency costs. A further report will be submitted for the consideration of the Committee as part of the Stimulus Package.</p> |
| 2.3 | Belfast Masterplan |
| 2.3.1 | Members have previously stressed the need to create a long-term vision for Belfast, using mechanisms such as the emerging Belfast Masterplan. The Masterplan will set out a high level physical vision for the city over the next 10 years and the "place shaping" projects which Members are continuing to identify as part of the stimulus package discussions will form a key component of that plan. |
| 2.3.2 | A draft Masterplan is due to be completed and considered by Members in December 2011 |

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| | and will form the basis for consultation with key stakeholders in the City including Government Departments, key delivery agents, Partnership Boards, the Voluntary and Community sectors and the Private Sector. |
| 2.4 | External Relations |
| 2.4.1 | Members asked that the Stimulus Package include a commitment to develop an External Relations Strategy which would seek to strengthen the Councils strategic relationships with key partner bodies, including Government Departments and the NI Executive, to ensure that priorities for city success and competitiveness happen through greater alignment of resources and plans. A further report scoping out the proposed approach and timescale for delivery for this project will be brought back to Committee in January 2012 in line with the emerging priorities within the revised Stimulus Package and Corporate Plan. |
| 2.4.2 | International Relations and Marketing Plan |
| | As agreed by Members, work has been ongoing to scope out the proposed approach to the development of an International Relations and Marketing Plan for the city which will seek to consolidate strategic international relationships to support economic growth and competitiveness. An update report will be submitted to Committee in December . |
| 2.5 | Consultative Conference Launch |
| 2.5.1 | Members have requested that a range of stakeholder engagement events be undertaken in the coming months linked to the emerging Corporate Plan, Belfast Masterplan and Stimulus Package. This would culminate in a joint launch conference in February 2012 which would provide an opportunity for the Council to set out its vision and priorities for the city and outline what it seeks to achieve within this council term in terms of its new Corporate Plan and Stimulus Package. A further detailed paper setting out firm proposals for the consultative conference launch will be worked up in liaison with Party Group Leaders and Corporate Communications and submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in December 2011 . |
| 2.6 | Timetable for Moving Forward |
| 2.6.1 | A proposed timetable for taking forward the development of the new Corporate Plan, Stimulus Package and Belfast Masterplan; as well as the supporting work streams is set out at Appendix 1 for Members consideration. This is set within the Council's established planning and rates setting process. |

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| 3.0 | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | The resource implications of taking forward the Council's commitments as set out in the "Stimulus Package" will be discussed further with Members in line with the budget setting process for 2012-15. |

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| 4.0 | Equality Implications |
| 4.1 | It is proposed that the launch in February 2012 is used as part of the consultation process that is carried out on the Corporate Plan and Stimulus Package in line with the Council's Equality Scheme. |

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| 5.0 | Recommendations |
| 5.1 | Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the proposed timetable, as set out at Appendix 1, when reports will be submitted to Committee on key strands of work. |

APPENDIX 1 – TIMETABLE

| STRANDS OF WORK | | Nov '11 | Dec '11 | Jan '12 | Feb '12 | Mar '12 |
|----------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| CORPORATE PLAN | People and Communities Workshop | 29 | | | | |
| | Draft Corporate Plan narrative discussed with Budget and Transformation Panel | | | | | |
| | Draft Corporate Plan submitted for the consideration of SP&R Committee | | | | | |
| STIMULUS PACKAGE | Joint Member/Officer Working Groups established to progress key project proposals and assess affordability | | | | | |
| | External Relations Strategy scoping document submitted for consideration of SP&R | | | | | |
| | Proposals for joint Corporate Plan, Stimulus Package and Masterplan consultative conference submitted for consideration of SP&R | | | | | |
| | Revised draft Stimulus Package discussed with Budget and Transformation Panel | | | | | |
| | Revised draft Stimulus Package submitted for consideration of SP&R | | | | | |
| | Engagement with key stakeholders on Corporate Plan, Masterplan & Stimulus Package | | | | | |
| | Consultative conference launch | | | | | |
| MASTERPLAN | Draft Belfast Masterplan submitted for the consideration of SP&R | | | | | |
| AFFORDABILITY/RATES | Initial report on rate base position and possible scenarios in terms of rate increases | | | | | |
| | Assess affordability of stimulus package proposals | | | | | |
| | Update report on rate base position and impact of scenarios | | | | | |
| | SP&R to set departmental cash limits and capital investment options, and potential resourcing plans for the stimulus package | | | | | |